



Kentucky can...

Ensure More Low-Income Students Can Start the Day with a Healthy Meal

Students who eat school breakfast are more likely to perform better on tests, attend more days of school, and graduate from high school. Despite this, just over 6 in 10 Kentucky low-income students who eat school lunch through the free and reduced priced school meal program are also eating school breakfast daily – meaning there are over 140,000 kids missing breakfast.

Recognizing the connection between school breakfast and academic achievement, we must rethink how and where school breakfast is served to close this participation gap and ensure kids have the nutrition they need to succeed.

Schools traditionally serve breakfast in the cafeteria before the start of the school day, but too many kids miss out because of late arrival times, stigma, and other issues. **One in 6** U.S. students are chronically absent – meaning they miss at least 3 weeks of the school year. When schools make breakfast a part of the school day by serving it in the classroom or through other models outside of the cafeteria, there is improved student attendance, fewer disciplinary issues, and higher test scores.

Research on the “Breakfast After the Bell” program:

- ✓ Serves breakfast as part of the school day
- ✓ Reduces absenteeism by an average of 6%
- ✓ Has led to improvements in reading achievement and “internalizing behaviors,” such as anxiety, loneliness, and sadness

A student eating school breakfast tends to do better in school and attend class more frequently, which leads to greater job-readiness and self-sufficiency after high school. These students, therefore, are set on a path to become less likely to struggle with hunger as adults.

By allowing schools the administrative flexibility to use up to 15 minutes for students to have breakfast in the classroom, such as while attendance is being taken, students won’t miss out on a free meal or important instructional time and can be set up for more academic success.

Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children Solution:

Allow up to 15 minutes of school instruction time to be used for children to eat breakfast in the classroom.



18% of kids in Kentucky live in a food insecure household

Income losses during the pandemic resulted in many more families needing food assistance. **In 2020, 26% of Black, 20% of Latinx, and 13% of White households with children experienced food insecurity.**